

# Curbing Aggressive Driving

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## *North Carolina Executive Committee for Highway Safety*

*Curbing Aggressive Driving  
Working Group*

**Initial Meeting**

**May 24, 2004**

# General Information

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- NTSHA - 1997 study showed that since 1990, 13,000 people have been injured or killed in crashes caused by aggressive driving.
- Aggressive drivers are more likely to drink and drive unbelted.
- Aggressive driving can easily escalate into an incident of road rage.
- Only 14% of those in a NHTSA survey felt that it was “extremely dangerous” to drive 10 mph over the speed limit
- Nationally, aggressive driving is a factor in 56% of all fatalities

*(data taken from FARS and was not an in-depth analyses of the contributing circumstances; therefore, this number is likely inflated)*

# North Carolina Data

Contributing Circumstance	% of Statewide	
	Fatalities	Injuries
Disregarded Traffic Control Device	8.6%	9.8%
Speed Involved Crash	39.8%	15.7%
Improper Lane Change	1.0%	2.0%
Passing Crashes	1.4%	1.1%
Followed Too Closely	0.3%	3.6%
Operated vehicle in erratic, reckless, careless, negligent or aggressive manner	16.3%	6.4%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>55.2%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>

# The Problem

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## Extent of the Problem

- Aggressive driving appears to be increasing in seriousness.
- Great variance in the estimates of the problem's extent, the perception of law enforcement and the public is that the phenomenon is becoming more prevalent.

## How Do You Define Aggressive Driving?

- One of the group's tasks
- Definition Examples

# How to Define “Aggressive Driving”

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## **NCHRP:**

*“Operating a motor vehicle in a selfish, pushy, or impatient manner, often unsafely, that directly affects other drivers.”*

In many cases, the behavior results from interaction between the driver and the driving environment.

## **NHTSA:**

*“Operating a motor vehicle in a manner that endangers or is likely to endanger persons or property.”*

*Aggressive driving is a traffic and not a criminal offense like road rage.*

## **Research Study:**

*“Aggressive Driving involves deliberate, unsafe driver actions such as driving over the speed limit, following too closely and unsafe lane changing.”*

# **Behaviors Commonly Associated with Aggressive Driving**

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- Speeding or driving too fast for conditions
- Driving at a speed different than the prevailing speed
- Improper lane changing
- Tailgating, weaving and improper passing
- Distracted drivers
- Maneuvering that causes other drivers to react or take evasive action
- Flashing lights or blowing the horn
- Preventing faster drivers from passing
- Directing at other drivers verbal or nonverbal expressions of anger
- Deliberately ignoring traffic control

# Other Factors

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In addition to the behaviors from the previous slide, studies have also found that:

- Congested roadways and pent-up frustration lead to aggressive driving and
- One's mood prior to driving prefigures one's level of stress while driving

There are clear associations between levels of anger and displays of aggressive driving.

# Other Factors

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Aggressive Driving is deemed a contextual violation. Two major components of the context are the driver's:

- physical and psychological state (background & current condition) and
- the roadway environment



# Common Characteristics of the Aggressive Driver

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- Young males
- They are high risk drivers; more likely to drink and drive, speed or drive unbelted.
- Their vehicle provides anonymity, allowing them to take out their frustrations on other drivers.
- Their frustration levels are high, concern for other motorists, low.
- They exhibit one or more of the behaviors listed on the previous slide.

# Potential Solutions:

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Successful strategies must combine three elements, often utilized in combination with each other:

- Enforcement
- Education
- Engineering

# Potential Solution Objectives:

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Two objectives have been identified for addressing aggressive driving:

- 1.) Deter aggressive driving in specific populations and at specific locations
- 2.) Improve the driving environment to eliminate or minimize the external “triggers” of aggressive driving

# Potential Strategies for the Objectives:

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## **1.) Deter aggressive driving in specific populations and at specific locations**

- Target Enforcement
- Conduct Educational and Public Information Campaigns
- Educate and Impose Sanctions Against Repeat Offenders

## **2.) Improve the driving environment to eliminate or minimize the external “triggers” of aggressive driving**

- Change or mitigate the effects of identified elements in the environment
- Reduce nonrecurring delays and provide better information about these delays

# Guidelines

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## **NCHRP Report 500:**

Guidance for Implementation of the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan

*Volume 1: A Guide for Addressing Aggressive Driving Collisions*

[http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=1548](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=1548)

